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18 May 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Lieutenant General D. V. Bennett, USA, Director
Defense Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT: Production of National Intelligence Estimates on
Soviet Forces (S-1087/DE)

1. I have studied carefully your memorandum to me of 6 April concerning production of NIE's on Soviet forces. It is obvious that changes in the scope and content of these papers made last year gave rise to problems which we must now sort out. In particular, the delays which caused inconvenience in Defense must not recur.

2. I take it to be established that estimates on these subjects must now contain extended statements of evidence and analysis supporting key judgments, and that differences of view must be fully explained, not merely asserted. The President's letter to me of 8 March warmly commended these innovations and must be taken as guidance for our future work.

3. Other users, as you indicate, may not need such a detailed presentation. For them, we should continue to provide extended conclusions and summary tables. Also, now that we have comprehensively covered the subject in the last round, it will be possible to transfer some material from the main text to annexes, and perhaps to omit some. In future, the main text should be constructed around the several key estimative issues, with purely descriptive or historical matter, so far as it is still needed, being removed to annexes.

4. I do not favor your suggestion for publishing a separate quarterly series on what you call "basic intelligence . . . that does not relate directly to key issues. . . ." A distinction between what is "basic" and what is not seems to me artificial in the case of these estimates, especially since we are now required to provide large amounts of detail. Users have often told us, moreover, that they greatly value having all relevant information in a single document. In addition, I do not wish to see a further proliferation of publications which, apart from being undesirable in itself, would be wasteful

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of our production resources at a time when we are under injunction to use them more efficiently.

5. As to procedures, I consider it essential that responsibility for organizing and guiding our common effort in the production of NIE's remain centered in the Office of National Estimates. This system, which has proved itself over more than two decades, best insures that the resources and special competence of all participating agencies will be fully and fairly utilized.

6. Therefore, I intend that the Board of National Estimates remain responsible as before for preparing the Community's working drafts as well as for effecting their coordination. The Board will task participating agencies for inputs in the form of contributions, draft sections of text or annexes, and statements of potentially divergent positions. (Clearly, for these estimates "contributions" which are in effect whole drafts are unsuited and wasteful.) ONE will insure that the inputs of all agencies are used to achieve a coherent, integrated, and balanced working draft.

7. Particularly in view of your desire to see NIE's 11-3 and 11-8 appear even earlier this year, a matter I understand we will be discussing shortly when USIB takes up the estimative program, I consider the procedures outlined above essential to accomplish our common task.

Richard Helms
Director

ONE

RHelms/ecd - 18/5/71

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